

Role of Parental Involvement in Enhancing Academic Achievement and Learning Outcomes in Higher Secondary Education

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Abstract: Parental involvement has been extensively studied as a critical factor influencing student academic achievement across educational levels. This paper examines the role of parental involvement in enhancing academic achievement and learning outcomes specifically in higher secondary education. Drawing on recent empirical studies, systematic reviews, and international assessments including PISA, the analysis reveals that parental involvement remains influential at the secondary level, though its nature shifts from direct school-based participation to home-based support and academic socialization. The findings indicate that parental involvement positively correlates with academic achievement through multiple pathways, including improved homework completion, enhanced time management skills, better school adjustment, and increased academic engagement. However, the relationship is nuanced: while emotional support and academic encouragement consistently predict positive outcomes, certain forms of involvement—particularly controlling homework monitoring and excessive pressure—may have adverse effects. Contextual factors including cultural values, economic development, and school environment moderate the strength of these relationships. The paper concludes by proposing an integrated framework for understanding parental involvement at the higher secondary level and offers recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to optimize family-school partnerships.

Keywords: Parental involvement, academic achievement, higher secondary education, homework behavior, school adjustment, academic engagement

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher secondary education represents a critical transitional phase in students' academic trajectories, serving as a bridge between compulsory schooling and post-secondary opportunities. During this period, adolescents face unique challenges including increased academic demands, heightened expectations for autonomy, and significant social-emotional development. The role of parents in supporting academic success during this stage has been a subject of considerable scholarly attention, yet findings remain complex and context-dependent.

Parental involvement is broadly defined as parents' interactions with schools and with their children to promote academic success. Throughout a child's learning process, parents are often the first people to make a significant difference in their lives, and regardless of social background, their involvement is found to be more important than economic capital alone. At the secondary education level, parental involvement characteristically shifts from direct, school-based participation to indirect, home-based forms of support, including parent-child educational discussions, high expectations and aspirations, and academic encouragement.

The importance of understanding parental involvement at the higher secondary level is underscored by global educational challenges. Despite international commitments to quality education under Sustainable Development Goal 4, significant proportions of students fail to reach minimum proficiency levels. Research indicates that family support serves as a promising contributor to adolescent academic success, particularly during the middle and high school years.

This paper synthesizes recent empirical evidence to examine the mechanisms through which parental involvement influences academic achievement at the higher secondary level, identifies moderating factors that shape this relationship, and proposes an integrated framework for understanding effective parental engagement strategies during this critical developmental period.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptualizing Parental Involvement in Secondary Education

Parental involvement is a multidimensional construct that defies simple definition. It is generally categorized into two primary types: home-based involvement and school-based involvement. Home-based involvement encompasses interactions between parents and students outside of school, including discussions about school performance, academic encouragement, and support with homework. School-based involvement refers to parents' engagement in activities within the school environment, such as attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering, and participating in school governance .

During the transition to secondary education, parental involvement undergoes significant transformation. Desforges and Abouchaar argued that parental involvement declines as children progress into middle school. However, subsequent research has challenged this assertion, observing that while the *frequency* of involvement may shift, the *nature* of involvement changes from direct to indirect forms. Boonk et al. found that older children benefit from typical indirect parental involvement, including parent-child educational discussions, parents holding high expectations and aspirations, and academic encouragement and support .

This shift reflects adolescents' developing autonomy needs and the increasing complexity of secondary school curricula, which may be beyond many parents' capacity to directly assist. Effective involvement at this level thus emphasizes academic socialization—communicating the importance of education, discussing future goals, and fostering positive attitudes toward learning—rather than direct instructional support .

2.2 Forms of Parental Involvement and Their Differential Effects

Recent research has refined understanding of parental involvement by distinguishing between behavioral and emotional dimensions. Behavioral involvement includes parents' actions such as engaging in conversations with children about school, helping with homework, and attending school events. Emotional involvement encompasses the affective support parents provide, which can impact children's motivation and attitudes toward learning .

This distinction is empirically significant. A study of 83,043 15-year-old students across 12 countries using PISA 2018 data found that parental emotional involvement was positively correlated with adolescents' digital reading performance, whereas the relationship for behavioral involvement was more complex. Notably, only *previous* parental behavioral support was positively associated with performance, while *current* parental behavioral support and school policies for parental involvement had unexpected negative associations . This suggests that the timing and nature of involvement matter considerably.

A study examining 528 middle and high school students in grades 5-12 found that parental involvement in homework has a positive relationship with students' homework behavior, particularly time management skills. However, while there was no direct relationship between parental involvement and overall academic achievement, parental involvement showed a positive relationship with academic achievement through homework completion and time management. Homework completion emerged as the variable with the strongest relationship with academic achievement .

2.3 Mechanisms Linking Parental Involvement to Academic Achievement

Several mediating mechanisms explain how parental involvement translates into improved academic outcomes at the secondary level. Using six waves of the Korean Children and Youth Panel Survey, Park and Kim found that parental involvement is positively associated with adolescents' academic achievement ($b = 0.172$). Proposed mechanism variables explained approximately 68.6% of this association, with academic engagement being the most salient pathway. The study identified four mediating aspects of school adjustment: academic engagement, compliance with school rules, positive peer relationships, and positive teacher-student relationships .

In the Cambodian context, research has shown that discussing a child's performance, eating meals together, and encouraging children positively correlate with test scores. However, frequent discussions regarding future educational plans were negatively associated with academic achievement, suggesting that excessive pressure regarding long-term educational outcomes may be counterproductive .

A study of Tanzanian high-performing secondary schools found a strong positive correlation between parental involvement and school performance ($r = 0.639$, $p < 0.01$). The intercorrelation matrix indicated significant associations across multiple dimensions including parents' concern with students' health and safety, supervision of homework, participation in school meetings, motivation of students, and provision of basic academic needs .

2.4 Moderating Factors: Culture, Economics, and Context

The relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement is not universal but is moderated by contextual factors. A large-scale study using 433,549 participants from 71 countries found that family support is positively associated with adolescents' academic performance in a global context. However, this association may decrease with economic development and increase with cultural individualism .

In developing countries, family support is more important as it is a relatively scarce resource that cannot be compensated for by other resources. In collectivist societies, adolescents are more likely to view academic success as a way to honor their families, creating stronger family-oriented motivation. Conversely, in individualist societies, adolescents are more likely to consider academic pursuit as a personal affair that should not be excessively influenced by parents—excessive parental involvement may threaten autonomy and intrinsic motivation .

A systematic review of 39 peer-reviewed publications found that the effectiveness of parental involvement is moderated by socioeconomic disparities, cultural misalignments, and disjointed policies. The review advanced an intersectional perspective, integrating cultural, digital, and emotional aspects of parental participation. It concluded that when parental involvement is expanded beyond standard communication to include co-governance, socioemotional support, and digital collaboration, it enhances student outcomes, institutional resilience, and inclusive practices .

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a comprehensive literature review methodology, synthesizing findings from recent empirical studies, systematic reviews, and international assessment data. Sources include peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2023 and 2026, drawing on ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect databases.

Inclusion criteria for studies included:

- Peer-reviewed quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research
- Focus on secondary or higher secondary education levels
- Examination of parental involvement as a predictor variable
- Academic achievement or learning outcomes as dependent variables
- Publication in English between 2020-2026

Data sources include the PISA 2018 and 2022 datasets, Korean Children and Youth Panel Survey, and nationally representative samples from Cambodia, Tanzania, Pakistan, and other contexts.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Positive Associations Between Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement

The synthesized evidence consistently demonstrates positive associations between parental involvement and academic achievement at the secondary level, though the nature and magnitude of effects vary across contexts and involvement types.

Quantitative findings from key studies include:

Study Context	Sample	Key Finding	Effect Size
International (PISA 2022)	433,549 students, 71 countries	Positive association between family support and academic performance	Moderated by GDP and cultural individualism
Turkey	528 students, grades 5-12	Parental homework involvement → improved time management → higher achievement	Indirect effect through homework completion
South Korea	6 waves of panel data	Parental involvement positively associated with achievement ($b=0.172$); 68.6% mediated by school adjustment	$b=0.172$
Tanzania	230 parents, 5 schools	Strong positive correlation between parental involvement and performance	$r=0.639$, $p<0.01$
International (PISA 2018)	83,043 students, 12 countries	Emotional involvement positively correlated with reading performance	Significant HLM results
Pakistan	320 higher secondary students	Significant positive relationships with academic success	Pearson correlation significant

4.2 Mediating Pathways

The mechanisms through which parental involvement affects achievement are well-elucidated in the literature:

Academic engagement emerged as the most salient mediator, explaining a substantial portion of the association between parental involvement and achievement. Parents who communicate the importance of education and discuss future goals encourage greater behavioral and emotional engagement in academics, resulting in improved performance .

Homework-related behaviors form another critical pathway. Parental involvement in homework positively relates to homework time management and homework completion. Among these, homework completion had the strongest relationship with academic achievement. At the secondary school level, there is a positive relationship between students' homework time, homework completion, time management skills, and academic achievement .

School adjustment including positive teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, and compliance with school rules mediates approximately 68.6% of the association between parental involvement and academic achievement .

Social capital mechanisms operate through parents' participation in school meetings and development projects. Research on effective schools confirms that high levels of family and community involvement in meetings and development projects enhance student performance .

4.3 Negative or Non-Significant Findings

Evidence also reveals circumstances under which parental involvement may be counterproductive:

Controlling homework monitoring has been associated with negative effects on test scores. When parents monitor homework through controlling efforts—such as pressuring or punishing children for incomplete tasks—it negatively affects scores in math, language, and social science .

Frequent discussions about school-related issues can negatively impact students' reading, math, science, and history performance in some contexts .

Current parental behavioral support (as opposed to previous support) and school policies promoting parental behavioral involvement showed unexpected negative associations with adolescent digital reading performance, suggesting that active intervention during adolescence may be less effective than early support .

Excessive pressure regarding future educational plans was negatively associated with academic achievement in the Cambodian context, indicating that the intensity and framing of discussions matter .

4.4 Cultural and Contextual Moderation

The relationship between parental involvement and achievement is systematically moderated by cultural and economic factors:

Economic development weakens the effect of family support on academic achievement. In economically less developed countries, family support has a stronger association with performance because it is a relatively scarce resource that cannot be compensated for by other resources. In developed countries, high-quality public educational resources can offset insufficient parental support .

Cultural individualism influences the strength of this relationship. In collectivist societies, family support has a stronger effect because adolescents view education as a way to honor their families, creating stronger family-oriented motivation. In individualist societies, excessive parental involvement may threaten autonomy and intrinsic motivation .

Regional patterns emerge from the systematic review: the majority of studies (n=14) were conducted in Asia, followed by Europe (n=12) and America (n=8), with limited representation from Africa (n=2) and Oceania (n=1) .

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 An Integrated Framework for Higher Secondary Parental Involvement

The evidence synthesized in this paper supports an integrated framework for understanding parental involvement at the higher secondary level. This framework recognizes that:

The nature of effective involvement shifts from direct instructional support (appropriate in primary education) to academic socialization, emotional support, and fostering autonomy. At the higher secondary level, parents should focus on:

- Communicating high educational expectations
- Engaging in discussions about academic and career goals
- Providing emotional support and encouragement
- Creating a supportive home learning environment

The timing of involvement matters. Early parental support appears to have lasting positive effects that persist through adolescence. Current behavioral involvement may be less effective, suggesting that early investment in supportive relationships yields long-term benefits .

Mediating mechanisms explain how parental involvement translates to achievement: through enhanced academic engagement, improved homework management, better school adjustment, and the development of positive peer and teacher relationships.

Contextual factors moderate effects significantly. Cultural values, economic development, school characteristics, and family resources all shape the effectiveness of parental involvement strategies. What works in one context may not transfer directly to another.

5.2 Implications for Parents

For parents of higher secondary students, the evidence suggests:

1. **Prioritize emotional support over controlling help.** Academic socialization—discussing the value of education, expressing confidence in the child's abilities, and maintaining high expectations—is more effective than direct homework supervision.
2. **Maintain consistent family routines.** Eating meals together and regular conversations about school activities are associated with higher test scores .

3. **Encourage autonomy with support.** Balancing appropriate academic pressure with respect for adolescent autonomy is essential. Excessive pressure and controlling behaviors may undermine intrinsic motivation and academic engagement.
4. **Build early foundations.** Early parental involvement sets the stage for positive academic trajectories that persist through adolescence.
5. **Stay connected to school** through appropriate channels. Participation in parent-teacher associations, conferences, and school events strengthens the family-school partnership that supports student success .

5.3 Implications for Educators

For educators and school administrators:

1. **Recognize the changing nature of involvement.** Secondary schools should not expect the same level of direct parental participation as primary schools but should facilitate appropriate forms of home-school connection.
2. **Communicate with parents about effective strategies.** Educate parents about the types of involvement that are most beneficial at the secondary level, emphasizing academic socialization over direct homework supervision.
3. **Build school-parent partnerships.** Strong parent-teacher associations and formal communication channels facilitate the positive school adjustment that mediates achievement outcomes .
4. **Consider cultural context.** Strategies should be adapted to local cultural values and economic realities. In collectivist contexts, leveraging family-oriented motivation may be particularly effective .

5.4 Implications for Policy

For educational policymakers:

1. **Support family-school partnership programs.** Policies that facilitate school-parent connections, particularly for families in resource-limited contexts, can help bridge achievement gaps.
2. **Address socioeconomic barriers.** Parents in economically disadvantaged circumstances face significant barriers to involvement. Policies that address these barriers—such as flexible meeting schedules, translation services, and transportation support—can promote more equitable participation.
3. **Promote digital collaboration.** Technology-enabled solutions can expand access to family-school communication and support, particularly valuable in diverse geographic contexts .
4. **Integrate parental involvement into school quality frameworks.** Recognizing parental engagement as a component of school quality can incentivize investment in family-school partnerships.

VI. CONCLUSION

This analysis demonstrates that parental involvement plays a significant role in enhancing academic achievement at the higher secondary level, though its effectiveness is contingent upon the nature, timing, and context of involvement. The evidence supports a shift in understanding from simple "more involvement is better" to a nuanced appreciation of what forms of involvement, in what contexts, and through what mechanisms, contribute to student success.

At the higher secondary level, parental involvement remains influential, but its character changes. Direct instructional support becomes less relevant as curricula complexity increases, while academic socialization—communicating educational values, discussing future goals, and maintaining high expectations—becomes more important. The mediating pathways through which involvement operates—academic engagement, homework completion, school adjustment, and social capital—highlight the multiple mechanisms through which parents influence outcomes.

Cultural and economic context significantly moderate these relationships. In collectivist societies and developing economies, family support has particularly strong associations with academic achievement. This suggests that understanding the cultural values and economic constraints within which families operate is essential for designing effective interventions.

The challenges of equity remain significant. Socioeconomic disparities, cultural misalignments, and disjointed policies continue to restrict equitable participation, especially in resource-limited environments. Addressing these challenges requires attention to structural barriers and context-responsive solutions that promote inclusive family-school partnerships.

Future research should prioritize longitudinal designs to examine causal pathways, cross-cultural comparative studies in underrepresented regions, and investigations of technology-enabled engagement strategies. As educational systems worldwide seek to improve quality and equity, understanding how families can best support adolescent learning remains an essential component of educational research and practice.

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